

Foundations Lesson 18

Coping with Depression Biblically

Outline:

- Defining depression
- Biblical reasons why Christians suffer depression
- Potential Triggers for depression
- How to cope with depression biblically

1. General Definition

DSM-5

Depression is a persistent mood that is characterized by intense feelings of inadequacy, sadness, grief, guilt, hopelessness, pessimism, irritability, and a decreased interest in or ability to enjoy normal activity.

Depression biblically defined is to allow this mood of intense feelings to keep us from doing the will of God in any given situation. Turn to Psalm 38 for a biblical description.

a. Christian and Worldly distinction as to why depression exists

Although depression can happen to believers and non-believers alike, believers think differently about depression.

- The dominant view of depression is not disease but a trial we must endure because of living in a fallen world where things have gone wrong.
- Believers will not allow their struggle with depression to be used by the “flesh” as an excuse to become dysfunctional in faith and practice when doing the will of God.

b. Biblical examples of those depressed

- King Saul 1 Samuel 16: 22-23
- Elijah 1 Kings 19:
- David Psalm 38
- Jonah 4: 1-5
- Peter Matt 26:69-75

- Judas

c. General thoughts on depression

- Christians who struggle with depression are outside the will of God T or F
- Depression is not always a result of sinful choices T or F
- Depression is a disease T or F
- Depression only happens to people who are doing something wrong or living in sin T or F
- It's okay to struggle with depression T or F
- Depression is the opposite of Christian joy T or F
- The bible teaches Jesus was a man of sorrows well acquainted with grief. Was Jesus ever downcast or depressed?

2. Biblical reasons why Christians suffer depression

- _____ sin **Psalm 38**
- _____ expectations. Elijah after his Mt Carmel victory
1Kings 19:3-4
- Trials that catch us by _____ such as an unexpected illness, **Job 3:1-26 1 Pet 4:12**
- Rebellion and a _____ to submit to God Jonah, King Saul **1 Samuel 16: 22-23**
- _____ in our battle against self and sin, Heb 12: 1-4
- Gods _____ on a society **Deut 28:28, Rom 1: 28-32**

2. Potential triggers for depression

- Traumatic events in life, i.e., trials such as divorce, death, Job loss, betrayal, rejection from society, war, natural disasters, imbalanced lifestyle.
- Rebellion & disobedience to authority
- Poor life choices: choosing a wrong spouse, wrong job, buyer's remorse
- Deferred hope or life not turning out as planned or expected. Marriage, barrenness, children, unfulfilled desire to be married or single,

- Not making the adjustments to God's sovereign choices for our lives. Preoccupation with our image, how tall we are, how we look, the era we are born, parents or no parents....
- Loneliness
- Disillusionment from bad theology realizing you have been taught wrong
- Unmet expectations about the Christian experience

How to cope with depression biblically

- Recognize when it happens to you or others.
- Recognize you're in spiritual warfare **1Pet 5:8**
- We must be those who are committed to walking in the truth of God's word rather than our feelings and the lies of Satan. **3 John 1-4**
- Hold fast to the sovereignty of God and slowly make the adjustment in your lifestyle
- Talk to God about how your feeling, press into Him not away from Him. Cast your cares upon Him knowing He cares for you. **1 Pet 5:6-7**
- Recognize there is a real devil who is waiting to seize the moment to get you to fall away from God and the means of His grace to you. **Eph 6: 8-10**
- Find a good friend or companion that can help you work through your bouts with depression.
- Avoid the temptation to rehearse hurts, wrongs, failures, and things that cater to self-pity, self-absorption, and a self-centered focus.
- Put on your daily armor **Eph 6: 10-18**
- Press into the life of the church
- No, that God loves you and is for you and that's all that really matters!!
Rom 8: 31-35

Resources

- Good Mood Bad Mood by Charles D Hodges M.D.
- Blame it on the Brain by Ed T Welch
- Faith and Feelings by Brian Borgman

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Coping with Depression Biblically Part 2

Outline:

- The truth about Depression
- The problem with Depression as disease
- The problem with Depression as sin
- Finding hope through Depression

1. The truth about Depression

- Depression is not a sin, or a disease, but a God given, negative emotion he has ordained for the good of humanity.
- Depression, like all other emotions, is an indicator of things taking place in our hearts.
- Depression, anger, guilt, fear, shame, and worry are all negative emotions that tend to generate unwanted feelings in us therefore we tend to react to them badly or sinfully.

a. Scriptural Illustrations of depression at work

- King Saul's bout with depression revealed his unfaithfulness but instead of addressing his unfaithfulness he focused on getting rid of the unpleasant, haunting, feelings of depression by hiring David to play for him.
- King David's bout with depression revealed his unconfessed sin & defiled lifestyle but instead of addressing his sin he tried to get rid of his unpleasant feelings of guilt & depression through a plan of his own strength. Psalm 38
- Jonah and Elijah were both depressed because of their pride and wanted to get rid of the unpleasant feelings of depression by asking the Lord to take their lives.

Point: When we become depressed, we tend to want to rid ourselves of the unpleasant, bad feelings it brings instead of asking questions related to what is taking place in our hearts. Gen 3:7-12

Question: Do feelings of depression always indicate there is sin in our lives?

Answer: No

Other reasons than sin for depression & negative emotions

- Depression can manifest our weakness and keep us dependent and abiding in Christ. 2 Corinth 12: 7-10
- Depression can remind us of the limits of our capacity in own strength. Matt 26:31, 33-36
- Depression reminds us we are living in a ruined world and that we must be careful not to put our hope here. Rom 8: 18-28
- Depression presses us into God, others, and the body of Christ for help.

2. The problem with depression as “disease”

- It dismisses what God has to say from the debate.
- It treats depression as an unwanted evil that has no spiritual benefit or value for our souls.
- It fixates on ridding a person from the unwanted feelings of depression (as if that is the problem) and misses the opportunity to deal with the issues of the human heart. Gen 4: 1-10 turn there please
- It tends to encourage medication as the ultimate solution of coping with reality of depression.

3. The problem with depression as a sin

- The bible does not categorize depression as a sin but a natural reality of the laws of human nature found within each one of us. Rom 7: 21-23
- Like the disease model, it treats depression as harmful or bad with no redeeming value.
- It tends to portray people wrestling through depression as cursed, like a leper. Job’s 3 friends were guilty of this.
- It makes the same categorical mistake as the world does in the disease model by categorizing depression as something other than a human emotion.

Finding hope through depression

Things we must choose to believe as we work through our times of depression and grief.

1. Depression is not a sin or a disease but a negative emotion we are to channel for the glory of God.
2. Depression and other negative emotions are indicators to investigate the deeper issues taking place within your heart.
3. Although depression does not always indicate sin, do not leave the stone of sin unturned when dealing with depression.
4. Do not fixate on getting rid of feelings of depression to the neglect of the deeper issue of your heart.
5. Press into the reality of depression by leaning on Jesus and learn to find joy despite the feelings of depression.
6. Don't obligate the Lord to remove the trial of depression until he completes His work of sanctification in your soul through your wanted feelings of depression.
7. Find those who have gone through similar experiences within the body who can give you sound counsel to help you to walk through your depression.
8. Depression is like anger and other negative emotions that are alleviated over time as you give yourself to a healthy diet of the word, prayer, and a right relationship to the Lord.
9. Find a good Christian or biblical counselor that can help you through this season of your life.
10. Remember, Jesus was tempted to sin in every experience of life that we experience yet without sin.
11. When you sin, do not allow the devil to keep you from God, but run back to him through repentance, confession, and faith in His promises... God is still for you! Peter after his betrayal

